



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOL GRAD RATE AMONG TOP 10 IN THE NATION

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Kentucky’s high school graduation rate is among the highest in the nation according to the latest data released this week by the U.S. Department of Education’s [National Center for Education Statistics](#).

The state’s 2013-14 graduation rate of 87.5 percent ranks Kentucky ninth overall and far exceeds the national graduation rate of 82.3 percent.

“We should be very proud of the efforts of our local educators to keep students engaged, in school and on course to earn a high school diploma,” Education Commissioner Stephen Pruitt said. “We have created a culture in Kentucky that education is important and that a high school diploma is absolutely necessary in this day and age if you want to realize success in life.”

A closer look at graduation rate data shows that while there are gaps among various student groups, in Kentucky, for the most part, the gaps are smaller than they are in many states and in the nation as a whole. This is especially significant among students living in poverty, who represent the majority of public school students in Kentucky.

2013-14 GRADUATION RATE AMONG STUDENT GROUPS

	KENTUCKY		KY GAP ¹	U.S.		U.S. GAP ¹
	2012-13	2013-14	2013-14	2012-13	2013-14	2013-14
All Students	86.1	87.5%	–	81.4	82.3%	–
African American	74	79.4%	-8.1	70.7	72.5%	-9.8
Hispanic	80	84.4%	-3.1	75.2	76.3%	-6.0
White	91.5	88.7%	+1.2	86.6	87.2%	+4.9
Free/reduced meal	80.4	84.0%	-3.5	73.3	74.6%	-7.7
Limited English Proficiency	76.0	65.6%	-21.9	61.1	62.6%	-19.7
Disabled	72.7	70.8%	-16.7	61.9	63.1%	-19.2

¹ Gap is determined by comparing specific student group with all students

The state saw gaps narrow and significant improvement in the graduation rate among African American, Hispanic and students who qualify for free/reduced-price meals compared to the previous year.

(more)

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“While this is certainly a step in the right direction, we need to be sure all students have access to the coursework and the supports they need to graduate on time. The opportunity gap should not stand in the way of earning a high school diploma in 4 years,” Pruitt said.

Since 2010, states, districts and schools have been using a new, common metric—the adjusted cohort graduation rate—to promote greater accountability and develop strategies that will help reduce dropout rates and increase graduation rates in schools nationwide. Kentucky did not fully move to the new way of calculating the graduation rate until the 2012-13 school year.

Pruitt said that even though the graduation rate is important, it should not be considered in isolation.

“We also need to be sure that our high school diploma has value and that all our students are graduating with the knowledge and skills they need to take the next step – whether that be 2- or 4-year college, a career training program that is a continuation of a certificate earned in high school, or the military,” Pruitt said.

Kentucky Department of Education data show that in the 2014-15 school year, even with efforts to increase the rigor of academic and career and technical education coursework, nearly 70 percent of Kentucky high school graduates met the state requirements for college/career-readiness.

“We must continue to encourage students to look beyond high school graduation,” Pruitt said. “Rather than view it as the end of their education, students need to see it as a gateway that leads them to college, a career and to a self-sustaining and productive life.”

To view the graduation rate data—including a state-by-state breakdown—click [here](#).

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